



# TAR WARS

## Program Guide

*Instructions to Implement for  
the 2023-2024 School Year*



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>Introduction to Tar Wars</b> .....	2
Tips for Teachers .....	2
Tips for Presenters .....	3
Activity List for Presenters .....	4
 <b>Cigarettes</b>	
Activity 1: What's in a Cigarette? .....	5
Activity 2: Cigarette Wordsearch .....	6
 <b>E-cigarettes, Vapes, and Other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)</b>	
Activity 3: Coping with the Pressure to Vape .....	7-8
Activity 4: Effects of Vaping on the Body .....	9-10
 <b>Getting Involved</b>	
Activity 5: Taking Action .....	11
Taking Action 1: Make Your School Tobacco and Vape Free .....	11
Taking Action 2: Make Your Voice Heard .....	12

# INTRODUCTION TO TAR WARS

Tar Wars is a tobacco-free education program for fourth- and fifth-grade students. Tar Wars was developed in 1988 by Jeff Cain, MD, and Glenna Pember, from Hall of Life, a division of the Denver Museum of Natural History, and Doctors Ought to Care. The Tar Wars PowerPoint presentation and presenter's guide are maintained by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and are free to use.

## Tips for Teachers

The presentation requires minimal preparation time. It should take approximately one hour and be presented in a typical classroom setting.

1. To arrange a presentation for your classroom, visit the Tar Wars program to view the PowerPoint presentation, program guide, and state coordinator information at [www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/care-resources/tobacco-and-nicotine/tar-wars.html](http://www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/care-resources/tobacco-and-nicotine/tar-wars.html).
2. Make copies of the parent information handout for each student to take home. The handout can be found at [https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient\\_care/tobacco/tar\\_wars/parent-info.pdf](https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/tobacco/tar_wars/parent-info.pdf).

The AAFP Tar Wars program gives full permission to reproduce the lesson plan for use in the classroom or community. However, you must identify that “Tar Wars is a program of the American Academy of Family Physicians” in all news releases and printed materials and give credit to the program’s original creators. Copies of the activities within this program guide should be made for each student.

Tar Wars is owned and operated by the AAFP. The presentation and lesson plans are intended to be implemented in classrooms and community group settings by volunteer presenters.



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## Tips for Presenters

The Tar Wars program can be presented to fourth- or fifth-grade students. It takes about one hour to present. This guide contains activities to support your presentation. Use your creativity and individuality to deliver the information to students and follow the numbered steps below for maximum effectiveness.

1. Contact your state coordinator, local school, or community organization to let them know you are interested in presenting Tar Wars. Visit [www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/care-resources/tobacco-and-nicotine/tar-wars/contact/state.html](http://www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/care-resources/tobacco-and-nicotine/tar-wars/contact/state.html) to locate your state coordinator.
2. Request to present in a typical classroom setting or group limited to about 30 students. The Tar Wars presentation is not designed to be conducted in a large assembly-style setting.
3. No special training is required to present the program. Your volunteer efforts and enthusiasm are key elements in the program's success. Ensure there is an adequate supply of materials if they are needed for the chosen activities.
4. After the presentation, ask the teacher to distribute the parent information handout to students located at [www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient\\_care/tobacco/tar\\_wars/parent-info.pdf](http://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/tobacco/tar_wars/parent-info.pdf).
5. When presenting, keep in mind the age of the students and additional cultural considerations.

## Program Goals

- Increase knowledge of the short-term health effects and image-based consequences of tobacco/nicotine use
- Illustrate the cost and financial impact of using tobacco/nicotine products and ways that money could be better spent
- Identify reasons why people use tobacco/nicotine
- Explain how tobacco advertising, tobacco/nicotine products used in movies, and the tobacco industry markets their products to youth
- Empower students to take action in combatting tobacco/nicotine in their schools and communities

## Activity List for Teachers

These activities supplement the Tar Wars program presentation.

### Cigarettes

Activity 1: What's in a Cigarette?

Activity 2: Cigarette Wordsearch

### E-cigarettes, Vapes, and Other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)

Activity 3: Coping with the Pressure to Vape

Activity 4: Effects of Vaping on the Body

### Getting Involved

Activity 5: Taking Action



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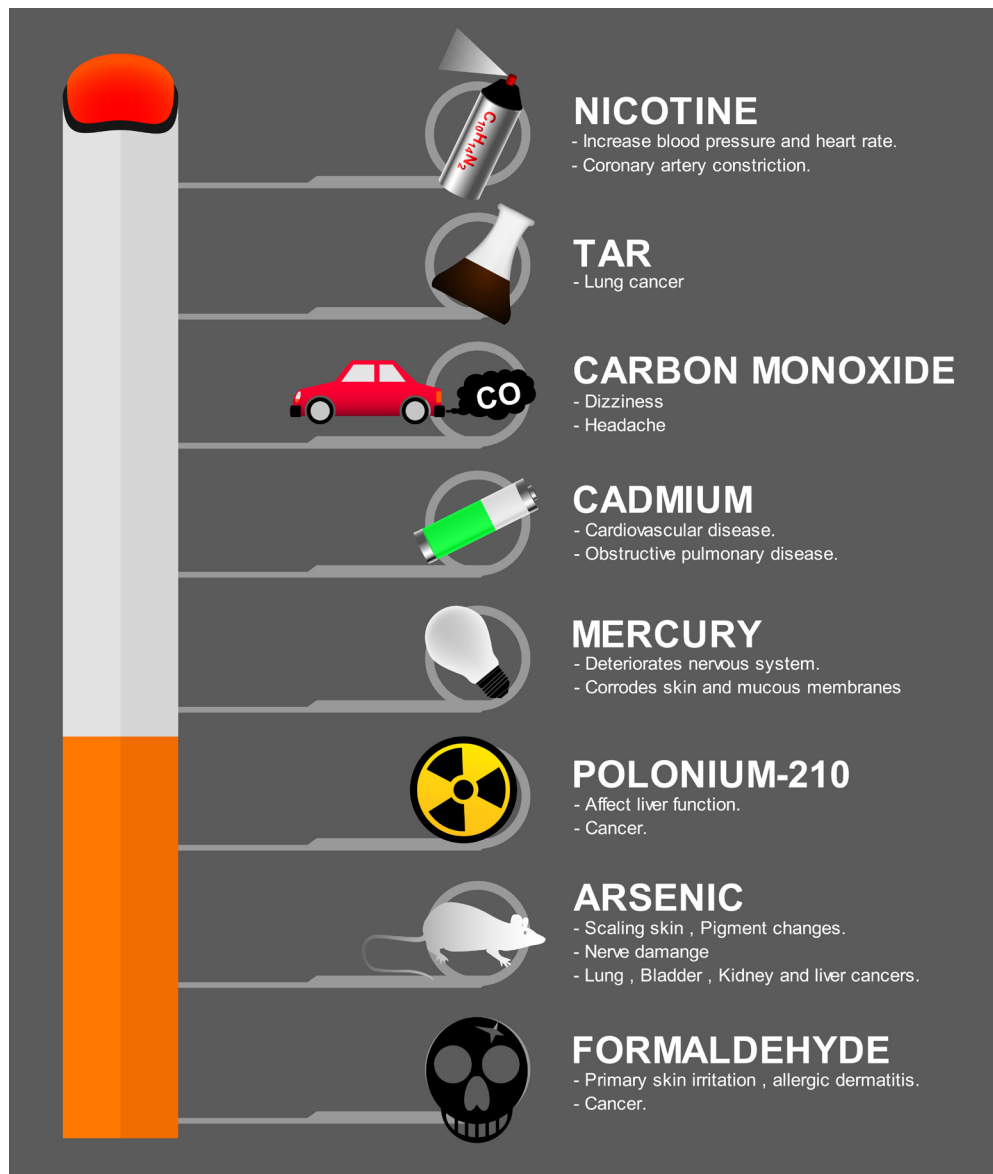
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# CIGARETTES

## Activity 1: What's in a Cigarette?

This activity aligns with slide 8 in the PowerPoint presentation and is designed to teach students about what is used to make cigarettes. The graphic below introduces students to ingredients in cigarettes and there is a fun and informational wordsearch activity on the following page to educate students about the harmful effects of tobacco use. After the presentation, you can hand out the wordsearch activity to reinforce the dangerous chemicals in cigarettes.

Cigarettes contain around 600 ingredients, many of which cause cancer. These same chemicals are found in other products. Here are some of the chemicals in tobacco smoke and their effects.



# CIGARETTES, CONTINUED

## Activity 2: Cigarette Wordsearch

X E U C L V R R C W E R C O C  
B Z U G I E M R V D R A S A E  
N Y S M A N C G I T R K R D D  
N L C C I P E C K E H B S Z Y  
I I K E F B I S X J O G T X H  
F R C N V T H H R N W I S Q E  
W X F O C W A J M A A Q N Q D  
I X R E T U U O X Y B R V G L  
I W S O S I N T O S A I U B A  
N N B T B O N Y R U C R E M M  
I C E D X G G E A T I Q W T R  
N O S I O P T A R A A Y Y O O  
Z P D X B T U I L R T M D R F  
U E P A V E M E N T K I E D A  
E M B A L M I N G F L U I D Q

### Instructions

Many of the harmful chemicals in cigarettes are also found in other products. Some of these ingredients are listed to the right with the other products they are used in. See if you can find the terms in the wordsearch activity.

### Cigarette Ingredients

- Nicotine
- Tar
- Carbon monoxide
- Mercury
- Arsenic
- Formaldehyde

### Other Products

- Insecticide
- Pavement
- Car exhaust
- Rat poison
- Embalming fluid

# E-CIGARETTES, VAPES, OTHER ENDS

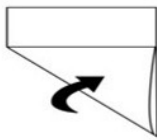
## Activity 3: Coping with the Pressure to Vape

This activity is designed to teach students how to cope with some of the negative implications of vaping. Paper fortune tellers are fun origami-style games. This fortune teller activity presents students with situations in which there are pressures to vape and shows how to avoid vaping in these situations. You can hand this out after the presentation to reinforce how to cope with the pressure to vape. Cut out the vaping fortune teller on the following page and follow the folding instructions below to see how to deal with situations where others are vaping around you.

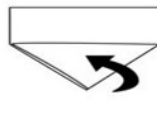
### Folding instructions



Take one piece of paper



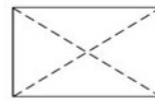
Fold to meet the other corner



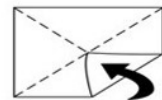
Fold the other corner to meet the edge



Cut off the section at the top



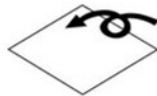
Unfold it to have a square piece of paper



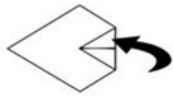
Fold up all four corners so that the points meet in the middle.



It should look like this when folded



Turn the paper over



Fold in all four corners so that the points meet in the middle.



It should now look like this



Fold it in half



Push your fingers into the corners to work it into this shape



# E-CIGARETTES, VAPES, OTHER ENDS, CONTINUED

## Activity 3: Coping with the Pressure to Vape, continued

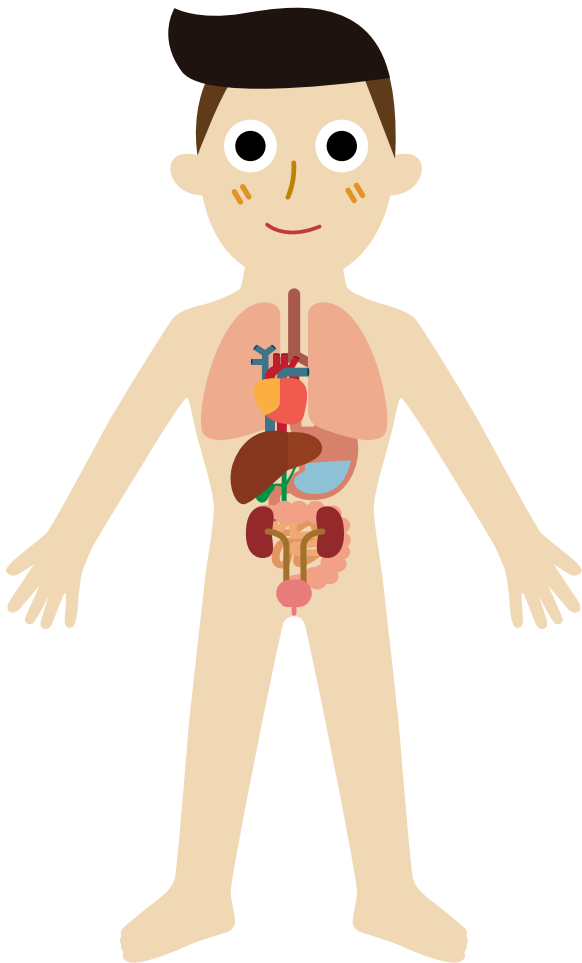
<p><b>6</b> At a friend's house</p> <p><b>3</b> Your friend starts vaping</p> <p><b>6</b> You tell them vaping isn't cool</p>	<p><b>9</b> "2nd Hand vapor won't hurt you"</p> <p><b>4</b> "Even 2nd hand clouds have Nicotine"</p> <p><b>3</b> You don't vape</p>	<p><b>4</b> At the park</p> <p><b>5</b> Everyone around you is vaping</p> <p><b>4</b> You move away to get some fresh air</p>
<p><b>9</b> An adult you know is vaping</p> <p><b>6</b> You tell them vaping is addictive</p> <p><b>8</b> You say no and walk away</p>	<p><b>2</b> They feel sick and cough</p> <p><b>5</b> You breathe clean, fresh air</p> <p><b>2</b> You tell them to cut it out</p>	<p><b>7</b> Someone you know vapes next to you</p> <p><b>7</b> You tell them to cut it out</p> <p><b>5</b> You move away to get some fresh air</p>
<p><b>8</b> After school</p> <p><b>7</b> Someone offers you a vape</p> <p><b>8</b> You say no and walk away</p>	<p><b>5</b> You see a friend vape</p> <p><b>2</b> They feel sick and cough</p> <p><b>2</b> You tell them to cut it out</p>	<p><b>2</b> Riding the bus</p> <p><b>7</b> Someone you know vapes next to you</p> <p><b>7</b> You tell them to cut it out</p>

# E-CIGARETTES, VAPES, OTHER ENDS, CONTINUED

## Activity 4: Effects of Vaping on the Body

This activity aligns with slide 15 in the PowerPoint presentation and should be used during the presentation. In this activity, students should brainstorm about how they think vaping impacts the human body. Answers are shown on the following page and in the Tar Wars PowerPoint presentation. In the PowerPoint presentation, answers will be displayed each time you click forward.

Vaping can change different parts of your body, including several important organs. Fill in the blanks below with how you think vaping affects your organs.



1. Brain: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Mouth: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Throat: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Heart: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lungs: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Stomach: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Skin: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Muscles: \_\_\_\_\_

# E-CIGARETTES, VAPES, OTHER ENDS, CONTINUED

## Activity 4: Effects of Vaping on the Body (continued)

### ANSWERS

1. **Brain:** Vapes and e-cigarettes contain nicotine which slow brain development in teens and affect memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, and mood, as well as increase the risk of other types of addiction later in life.
2. **Mouth:** Vaping introduces bacteria to the mouth and can lead to tooth decay, cavities, and gum disease.
3. **Throat:** Vaping can cause a sore throat and lead to other health conditions of the throat.
4. **Heart:** Chemicals in vapes and e-cigarettes can cause heart disease and increase your risk of heart attack.
5. **Lungs:** Chemicals in vapes and e-cigarettes damage the small pathways in the lungs and cause coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath, and can lead to other serious health conditions, including cancer.
6. **Stomach:** Vaping can cause problems in your stomach like nausea, vomiting, and pain.
7. **Skin:** Nicotine in vapes and e-cigarettes can cause excess sweating.
8. **Muscles:** Vaping can cause dehydration, leading to muscle cramps.



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# GETTING INVOLVED

## Activity 5: Taking Action

This activity aligns with the Getting Involved section starting on slide 28 in the Tar Wars PowerPoint presentation. There are two actions presented in the program guide for students to make their voices heard to prevent tobacco use and vaping in their schools and communities. Present these actions to the students with the provided instructions for each action. You can find additional actions students can take by clicking through this section in the PowerPoint presentation. These activities can also be completed as a standalone activity using the Scavenger Hunt worksheet.

### Taking Action 1: Make Your School Tobacco and Vape Free

How your school addresses tobacco and vaping has significant health implications for students. Most schools have tobacco and vaping policies, but not all policies are equal in preventing tobacco use and vaping. This activity is intended to help schools examine their tobacco and vaping policies against a model policy or best practice” developed by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the American Heart Association. Working together as Tar Wars Champions, the presenter, teacher, and students can create momentum for improving your school’s tobacco and vaping policies. Follow these easy steps to see if this activity is suitable for you.

- ◆ With the teacher or presenter, discuss the students’ comfort with proposing a review of the school’s existing tobacco/vaping policy. If they are comfortable, this will make a good activity.
- Prepare a package of information to build momentum for improving tobacco/vaping policies in your school or school district by providing the appropriate school officials with the following:
  - **Student Voice:** Work with students to write a short note about why they think creating a healthier, tobacco- and vape-free school environment is important. Encourage the students to be creative and use their strengths. This could include drawing pictures, writing poems, or telling stories. This is the in-class portion of this exercise.
  - **Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment:** This tool can quickly and easily identify strengths and opportunities for improving policies and practices: [www.healthiergeneration.org/our-work/schools/thriving-schools-integrated-assessment](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/our-work/schools/thriving-schools-integrated-assessment)
  - **Model Policy:** This guide can help your school develop a tobacco/vaping policy: <https://api.healthiergeneration.org/resource/872>

# GETTING INVOLVED, CONTINUED

## Taking Action 2: Make Your Voice Heard

How your city and state address tobacco and vaping use have important health implications for students. Policies like raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco are important for combatting tobacco use and vaping. These policies gained momentum in cities and states first. This activity raises awareness of the importance of innovative tobacco/vaping prevention policies and uses the students' voices to build momentum toward these actions. Working together as Tar Wars Champions, the presenter, teacher, and students can create momentum for improving your city, county, or state tobacco/vaping policies. Follow these steps to see if this activity is suitable for you.

- With the teacher, discuss the students' comfort with this exercise. If they are comfortable, this will make a good activity.
- Prepare a package of information to send to appropriate elected officials. Work with the students to raise the importance of civic engagement for tobacco prevention and health promotion.
  - **Student Voice:** Work with your students to write a short note about why they think creating healthier, tobacco- and vape-free communities is important. Encourage the students to be creative and use their strengths. This could include drawing pictures, writing poems, or telling stories. This is the in-class portion of this exercise.
  - **Identifying Elected Officials:** Use these tools to find your elected officials and write their names and contact information below:
    - ◆ State Legislators: [https://openstates.org/find\\_your\\_legislator/](https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/)
      - ▶ \_\_\_\_\_
      - ▶ \_\_\_\_\_
    - ◆ City Mayors: [www.usmayors.org/mayors/](http://www.usmayors.org/mayors/)
      - ▶ \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Model Policies:** Use the following information to inform your elected officials about evidence-based policies for reducing the harm of tobacco/vaping.
    - ◆ Eliminate policies in states that preempt local tobacco control policies: [www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/preemption\\_youth\\_access](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/preemption_youth_access)
    - ◆ Tobacco minimum floor pricing laws: [www.changelabsolutions.org/product/minimum-floor-price-laws](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/minimum-floor-price-laws)
    - ◆ Prohibit smoking in multi-unit housing: [www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/model-ord-smokefree-housing](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/model-ord-smokefree-housing)